

NOTES FROM THE:

Air Force Accounting and Finance Office

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The AFAFO completed its second year on 1 October 2000. Just like the first, last year was full of challenges and opportunities and has gone by rapidly. In addition, this year promises to be as challenging as the first two. In this issue of The Air Force Comptroller I'd like to briefly revisit the history of your AFAFO, tell you about some new additions to the staff, and update you on the most recent meeting of the Strategic Leadership Conference (SLC).

AFAFO History

The AFAFO officially began operation on 1 October 1998. The 14-person organization is collocated at the Denver Finance Center with the Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS) agency. The Air Force Secretariat-level office reports directly to the Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Financial Management and Comptroller, the Honorable Robert F. Hale. We recently added both a Pentagon and Columbus liaison office respectively—more on that later. The charter of the AFAFO includes: enhancing communications between DFAS, SAF/FM, and the MAJCOM/FMFs; providing oversight of FSOs; negotiating DFAS/Air Force workload transfers; developing Air Force directives; and establishing a Quality Assurance Program and ensuring effective internal controls. A key component of our success is our relationship with DFAS and other Air Staff and DoD Agencies; therefore, it became increasingly clear of the need for both an AFAFO presence in the Pentagon as well as Columbus.

Pentagon and Columbus Liaison Offices

In the October issue of The Air Force Comptroller you may have noticed the addition of two new boxes on the AFAFO organization chart—Pentagon and Columbus Liaison offices. I am happy to announce that Lieutenant Colonel Joe Ward has joined the staff as the Pentagon liaison after a stint as Chief, Accounting & Finance, Headquarters Air Force Reserve. Joe brings a wealth of finance and accounting experience to the table and serves as our primary liaison between Air Force and Headquarters DFAS, DIMHRS focal point, and works a myriad of issues with Air Staff and other DoD Agencies to include PERSTEMPO, TSP, CSB, Transit Subsidy, to name a few. We have added two new positions to our Columbus location, Mr Mac McCutcheon and Ms Sunita Bouri. Both bring a ton of Air Force and DFAS accounting experience to their respective positions and

are welcome additions. Mac has an extensive accounting background from working at DFAS Columbus and Sunita has worked for the Air Force and DFAS in virtually every functional area. They primarily work Defense Reform Initiative Directives 47 and 53 dealing with the Defense Procurement and Pay System, Defense Corporate Database, and the Standard Procurement System. They are hard at work writing the business rules for the concept of operations for these initiatives as well as the reconciliation of MOCAS contracts and actively involved in reducing MOCAS interest payments.

SLC Update

Your SLC is composed of each MAJCOM/FMF to include the 11th Wing, the United States Air Force Academy, and the Air National Guard. In addition, the Executive for Enlisted Matters, Chief Larry Gonzales, is a new member representing the voice of the 3800+ enlisted personnel in the career field—over 3000 alone in Financial Services! The group is co-chaired by the AFAFO Director and the Director, Accounting, Banking, and Comptroller Support, SAF/FMPC, in the Pentagon. Currently, the SLC meets every six months—normally in April and October.

The group evolved from what was initially known as the Consolidation Working Group (CWG) in the '94/'95 timeframe. This working group was a DFAS initiative started with the purpose to work various consolidation issues to include transfer of functions and responsibilities, systems issues, personnel issues (to include performance reports, appraisals, awards, and decorations, etc.), in addition to database cleanup. Since a consolidation of this magnitude had never been accomplished before (in the private or public sector) there was very little direction and guidance. Initially, the group was composed of all the OPLOC Directors and each MAJCOM/FMF. By late 1997, most bases had consolidated and the CWG evolved into the Joint Strategic Leadership Conference (JSLC). By then, only four bases remained to be consolidated and the major work and purpose of the CWG was completed—a monumental undertaking for sure.

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The JSLCs new focus was on more strategic issues, i.e., strategic planning, crossflow of personnel between DFAS and Air Force, and thus, the new name and focus to reflect the revised leadership forum. Soon thereafter, the AFAFO was established and there was no real need for OPLOC Director involvement, hence the establishment of the SLC and the deletion of the joint moniker.

As in past meetings, many exciting topics and challenging action items came out of the October SLC. Some of the topics and approximately 40-action items we discussed and are working include the Air Force Financial Services Center— a virtual financial services superstore that can be found at <http://www.saffm.hq.af.mil/affsc/>, getting Defense Military Pay Office training into the schoolhouse curriculum and Career Field Education Training Plan (CFETP), and two other exciting initiatives: Employee/Member Self Service (E/MSS) and Electronic-Leave and Earnings Statements (E-LES). I will elaborate on the latter two initiatives.

Employee Member Self Service—E/MSS

DFAS is now offering a new service called Employee/Member Self Service (E/MSS). This service allows DoD customers to update certain pay information by using a Personal Computer (PC) to access the pay system via the Internet or by using a touch tone telephone via an Interactive Voice Response System (IVRS). Active and Reserve Marine Corps members, DoD civilian employees, military retirees, and annuitants can now change their own Federal tax withholding status and exemptions; start, stop or change allotments (this feature is not a part of the annuitant payroll system); change their correspondence address; and update their financial institution electronic fund transfer information. Future phases of E/MSS will include other transactions, such as starting or stopping savings bonds and changing state taxes. Air Force customers are scheduled to have E/MSS capabilities in the first quarter of FY01. Further details are available at the DFAS home page at <http://www.dfas.mil>.

Electronic-Leave and Earning Statement (E-LES) Via E/MSS

DFAS will offer another Internet capability as well. Once fully implemented, E-LES will allow DoD civilian employees and Marine Corps active and reserve members to view and print their LES through E/MSS. Additionally, E-LES will be made available to Army, Navy, and Air Force members early next year—projected for the spring of 2001. The E-LES mirrors the existing hardcopy LES and is protected by a secure protocol that protects data between the user's PC and the E/MSS server. As always, hardcopy distribution of the LES will continue; however, employees and members will be given the opportunity to stop the hardcopy if desired.

In summary, your SLC is working a variety of issues on your behalf and helping shape the current and future look of our dynamic career field. Thanks for all your help and keep up the great work!

